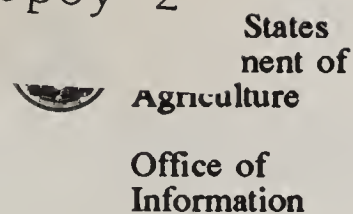


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Selected Speeches and News Releases

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Statement

U.S. Department of Agriculture • Office of Information

Prepared for delivery by Dr. Charles E. Hess, Assistant Secretary of Agriculture for Science and Education, on The National Research Council's Report on Alternative Agriculture, Sept. 7.

American agriculture is facing major challenges, some of which may appear to be in conflict. On one hand, agriculture needs to be highly efficient and internationally competitive in order to be economically viable. On the other hand, it needs a system of production which is environmentally sensitive, sustainable, and whose products are viewed as safe. I believe both goals are achievable.

The National Research Council Report on Alternative Agriculture is designed to help accelerate the achievement of these goals by defining the challenge, presenting the case studies of the successful application of alternative agriculture practices, and recommending a course of action.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture is deeply interested in the findings of the study and the light they might shed on the future for American farmers, the Nation's natural resources, environmental quality, and the well-being of rural communities. USDA is pleased to have been one of the sponsors of this study.

Many of the Nation's farmers have experienced financial stress in the 80's due to the downturn in exports of farm products, commodity prices, and land values. Also, farmers are under increased pressure to reduce non-point pollution from fertilizers and pesticides and reduce erosion. A major objective of alternative farming systems is to reduce the use of purchased inputs, primarily chemicals, while maintaining productivity. If the net cash returns to the farmer can be increased through decreased production costs, the competitive position of the farmer will be improved and the potential for adverse environmental impacts will decrease.

The widespread awareness of the need for economical and environmentally sound ways to farm has not been matched by the availability of reliable and practical information on what, in fact, can be done. The USDA/land grant research and education system has struggled to meet that challenge, some say too slowly, while others are convinced

that we have the necessary pieces and now need the time to fit them together.

It is that environment of need and uncertainty that has spawned the development of new ideas and approaches—everything from integrated pest management to the application of biotechnology. During the past year, public and farmer concerns over deteriorating water quality have led to a Presidential Water Quality Initiative, assigning USDA a lead role in putting in place a system that will accurately assess the precise nature of the relationship between agricultural activities and ground water quality, and develop and facilitate the adoption of production management strategies which will prevent ground water contamination.

This past July, R. Dean Plowman, administrator of USDA's Agricultural Research Service, and I participated in the dedication of a new \$11.9 million Soil Tilth Laboratory on the Iowa State University campus. This laboratory will study the effects of a variety of agricultural practices upon soil structure, organic matter, microorganisms, and movement of nutrients. Some experiments will involve the Thompson Farm included in the National Research Council study.

Faced by the confluence of mounting economic and environmental pressures in agriculture, Congress wrote into the 1985 Food Security Act the charter for what is now called the Low-Input Sustainable Agriculture (LISA) Research and Education Program. The purpose of the LISA program is to strengthen and speed up the development and the dissemination to farmers of reliable, practical information on environmentally and economically sustainable farming practices. It recognizes that there is no magic formula and that the "best" set of practices will vary from farm to farm.

The Agriculture Department soon underscored the rationale for LISA research and education in a Secretary's Memorandum on alternative farming systems issued in early 1988. It said simply that farmers need to have more choices that are not only profitable, but which will enable them to effectively reduce their dependence on agricultural chemicals and thereby minimize the environmental risks of farming. Signed by then Secretary Richard Lyng, that policy is endorsed today by Secretary Clayton Yeutter.

Whatever we call it—alternative, sustainable, or low-input agriculture—we can see now a direction that, I believe, makes remarkable sense for farmers and the rest of our society. That direction does not involve trying to tell farmers how to farm, but gives them the

information they need to choose their practices wisely. The farmer must decide. If limited, wise use of purchased chemical fertilizers and pesticides is the only realistic option, and that use brings minimal risks, so be it. If organic farming—growing food without any of those chemicals—is the best alternative, fine. The point is simple. We can't profess to give farmers choices and then say we oppose one choice or another.

It is in that spirit of openness and willingness to change for the better that we will all study thoughtfully the National Research Council report. It comes at a critical time. Its significance could be unparalleled.

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News Releases

U.S. Department of Agriculture • Office of Information

AGENCIES GET NEW YARDSTICK TO MEASURE NATION'S SOIL LOSSES

WASHINGTON, Aug. 31—A new computer model for calculating the nation's soil losses was officially handed over to the federal agricultural agencies that will use it at a luncheon ceremony held in Lafayette, Ind., today.

“The new model should help conservation agencies and farmers to control soil erosion in a more cost-effective way on America's farms, rangeland and forests,” said R. Dean Plowman. He is administrator of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Research Service, which developed the Water Erosion Prediction Project (WEPP) model.

At the ceremony culminating a three-day WEPP team meeting, Plowman handed over computer disks containing the first phase of the WEPP model to USDA Soil Conservation Service chief Wilson Scaling and to representatives of USDA's Forest Service and the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Land Management. These agencies will conduct field tests and evaluations of the model.

The WEPP computer program mathematically simulates soil erosion caused by rainfall, snowmelt or irrigation. It can simulate erosion for anywhere from one storm to a period of several years. “It will largely replace the Universal Soil Loss Equation (USLE), used since the 1950's, which is less accurate under certain conditions and gives only average annual losses,” Plowman said.

“We've packaged decades of research and soil survey data in an easy-to-use form,” he said. “The latest data came from hundreds of simulated rainstorms at nearly a hundred sites across the country.

“We'll be working with the agencies to complete two more versions of the model, which will extend it to larger areas of the landscape where we can deal with stream channel erosion and sediment yield from watersheds.”

SCS employees will use WEPP erosion estimates as the basis for helping farmers draw up and apply conservation plans to reduce erosion to tolerable levels, the same way they've used the USLE.

The 1985 farm bill gave added urgency to WEPP, by making some farmer assistance from USDA contingent on conservation plans on highly erodible land.

“Today’s transfer,” Plowman said, “marks the end of the first phase of a 10-year project that began in 1985. In the next phase the agencies will test and refine the model for wide use after 1992. It should be in place nationwide by 1995 and should improve the conservation planning process,” he said.

According to Scaling, “WEPP gives us a much-needed tool to help us tailor our recommendations to the main causes of soil erosion. We’ll gradually change over to the new model after the testing and refinement stages are completed.”

The ARS and the three user agencies are conducting the project in cooperation with seven land-grant universities. The U.S. Geological Survey of the Interior Department recently joined the project in an advisory capacity.

Leonard J. Lane, project leader for the first phase of WEPP and an ARS hydrologist in Tucson, Ariz., said soil erosion represents “not only the loss of one of civilization’s most precious resources, but also the most common contaminant of waterways. An estimated 5 billion tons of topsoil move across the U.S. countryside each year. Some of it ends up in streams and lakes where it adversely impacts fish and other aquatic life. In addition, any attached pesticides or fertilizers pose another threat to the environment.”

For the past two summers, Lane said, teams of federal scientists traveled across the country with large rainfall simulators in the form of sprinklers that resemble horseless carousels. Each sprinkler spins around and sprays water on test plots. The scientists used the sprinklers for experiments on cropland, rangeland and forestland to collect data on how different soils respond to rainfall, Lane said.

Many things came together to make WEPP feasible today, where it was not feasible 20 years ago, he said. “We have a better understanding of hydrologic and erosion processes and more complete soil survey data. And personal computers are affordable and widely accepted.

“While the USLE remains a powerful tool, it does have its limitations. It is not as good a predictor of erosion on rangeland or forest land as it is on cropland. Its mathematical form won’t allow it to represent

hydrologic and erosion processes as we know them to occur, while those in WEPP do.”

Don Comis (301) 344-2773

#

USDA ANNOUNCES PREVAILING WORLD MARKET PRICE FOR UPLAND COTTON

WASHINGTON, Aug. 31—Under Secretary of Agriculture Richard T. Crowder today announced the prevailing world market price, adjusted to U.S. quality and location (adjusted world price), for Strict Low Middling (SLM) 1-1/16 inch (micronaire 3.5-4.9) upland cotton (base quality) and the coarse count adjustment in effect from 12:01 a.m. Friday, Sept. 1, through midnight Thursday, Sept. 7.

Since the adjusted world price (AWP) is above the 1987, 1988 and 1989 crop base quality loan rates of 52.25, 51.80 and 50.00 cents per pound, respectively, the loan repayment rates for the 1987, 1988 and 1989 crops of upland cotton during this period are equal to the respective loan rates for the specific quality and location.

The AWP will continue to be used to determine the value of upland cotton that is obtained in exchange for commodity certificates. Because the AWP in effect is above the established loan rate, loan deficiency payments are not available for 1989-crop upland cotton sold during this period.

Based on data for the week ending Aug. 31, the AWP for upland cotton and the coarse count adjustment are determined as follows:

Adjusted World Price	
Northern Europe Price	83.26
Adjustments:	
Average U.S. spot market location	12.10
SLM 1-1/16 inch cotton	2.20
Average U.S. location	0.39
Sum of Adjustments	<u>-14.69</u>
ADJUSTED WORLD PRICE	68.57 cents/lb.
Coarse Count Adjustment	
Northern Europe Price	83.26
Northern Europe Coarse Count Price	<u>-78.67</u>
	4.59
Adjustment to SLM 1-inch cotton	<u>-4.75</u>
	-0.16
COARSE COUNT ADJUSTMENT	0 cents/lb.

The next AWP and coarse count adjustment announcement will be made on Sept. 7.

Charles Cunningham (202) 447-7954

#

USDA PROPOSES REGULATIONS FOR PRIVATE HORSE QUARANTINE FACILITIES

WASHINGTON, Aug. 31—The U.S. Department of Agriculture is proposing to allow permanent private facilities to quarantine imported horses.

The proposed regulations would require such facilities to comply with sanitation and quarantine standards similar to those at federally-run facilities to ensure that horses are healthy before leaving quarantine.

“Import demands sometimes exceed available space at federal facilities,” said James W. Glosser, administrator of USDA’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. “Although importers occasionally set up temporary private quarantine facilities for single shipments of horses, these are not available to other importers.

Requirements for the permanent private facilities will be similar to those already in place for temporary ones,” Glosser said, “but will

include stricter disease control and security regulations since different lots of horses will be continuously processed through a facility.”

The proposed regulations for the private facilities address responsibility for costs, appropriate supervisory and personnel procedures, location, construction, sanitation, security, handling of horses, recordkeeping and environmental responsibilities. USDA would provide necessary veterinary supervision of the importations for permanent or temporary private facility operators, who would reimburse USDA for the services.

USDA requires that horses imported from foreign countries other than Canada be quarantined before entering this country to prevent the introduction of exotic equine diseases. Canadian import regulations closely parallel those in the United States, making it unnecessary for horses imported from that country to be quarantined.

The proposed regulations will be published in the Sept. 5 Federal Register. Comments will be accepted if they are received on or before Nov. 6. An original and three copies of written comments referring to docket number 85-061 should be sent to Chief, Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD, APHIS, USDA, Room 866, Federal Building, 6505 Belcrest Road, Hyattsville, Md. 20782.

Comments may be inspected at USDA, Room 1141-S, 14th Street and Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C., between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays.

Anita K. Brown (301) 436-5931

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YEUTTER ANNOUNCES PROVISIONS OF THE 1989 CROP DISASTER PROGRAM

WASHINGTON, Sept. 1—Secretary of Agriculture Clayton Yeutter today announced provisions of the 1989 crop disaster program and that payments will be made in generic commodity certificates.

The program will be administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service.

“We stand ready to implement the Disaster Assistance Act of 1989 in a timely manner,” Yeutter said. “Our ASCS field staff will process disaster payment requests as quickly as possible to get financial aid to those farmers who have suffered crop losses due to drought, excessive moisture and other perils.”

Producers who suffered crop losses because of adverse weather or related conditions in 1988 and 1989 may be eligible for 1989 crop disaster payments, which are expected to total about \$900 million, Yeutter said.

Additional provisions of the 1989 disaster program are:

—Applications for payments will be accepted by ASCS county offices Sept. 15 through April 2, 1990. To qualify for disaster payments, producers must submit production records no later than April 27, 1990.

—The value of a replacement crop will be used to determine the producer's disaster payment for losses on the first crop. However, the value will be determined by reducing the actual replacement crop production by 25 percent, then multiplying the result by an average market price.

—Producers who are prevented from planting crops or whose crops are planted and subsequently fail on land in a flood or flowage easement area will be eligible for disaster benefits even if such losses result from flooding.

—Honey producers will be eligible for crop loss payments based on the difference between actual production per hive compared with historical production.

—Producers will not be permitted to use multiple peril crop insurance yields for determining losses under the 1989 disaster program.

—Additional disaster payments to producers will not be made on crops that suffer losses resulting from reduced quality other than on nonprogram crops which are considered unmarketable. Seventy percent of the production that is determined unmarketable by the county ASC committee will be excluded in calculating disaster benefits.

—Replanting assistance is available in the form of a cost-share payment for orchard and nut trees planted at any time to produce annual crops for commercial purposes that died because of freezing or a related condition in 1989.

—Cost-share payments are available to replant seedlings planted in 1988 and 1989 for the production of trees for harvest for commercial purposes that died in 1989 because of drought or a related condition.

—Under the emergency feed assistance program, producers will now be allowed to purchase farm-stored feed grain pledged as collateral for Commodity Credit Corporation price support loans.

General crop loss criteria and payment rates are as follows:

<i>Crop</i>	<i>Losses</i>	<i>Payment Rates</i>
Program Crops:		
With crop insurance	35-100%	65% of target price
No crop insurance	40-100%	65% of target price
Program crop nonparticipants	50-100%	65% of price support level
Sugar, tobacco and peanuts:		
With crop insurance	35-100%	65% of price support level
No crop insurance	40-100%	65% of price support level
Soybeans and sunflowers	45-100%	65% of market price
Nonprogram crops	50-100%	65% of market price
		Tom VonGarlem (202) 447-6761
#		

CCC LOAN INTEREST RATE FOR SEPTEMBER 8 PERCENT

WASHINGTON, Sept. 1—Commodity loans disbursed in September by the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Commodity Credit Corporation will carry an 8 percent interest rate, according to Keith Bjerke, Executive Vice President of the CCC.

The 8 percent rate is down from the 8-1/8 percent rate for August and reflects the interest rate charged CCC by the U.S. Treasury in September.

Bruce Merkle (202) 447-6787

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FGIS ADDS AGRI-SCREEN TO APPROVED LIST OF AFLATOXIN TEST KITS

WASHINGTON, Sept. 5—The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Federal Grain Inspection Service has completed its evaluation of commercially available aflatoxin test kits submitted for approval and has added Neogen Corp.'s Agri-Screen test kit to the list of approved kits.

The kits are approved for determining the presence of aflatoxin in corn either quantitatively or by indicating an excess of the 20-parts-per billion aflatoxin threshold. The five previously approved are EZ-Screen, Aflatest, Afla-20-Cup, OXOID, and SAM-A.

For technical information, contact Steve Tanner, Assistant to the Administrator for Technology, FGIS, (202) 382-0216; or David Orr, Deputy Director, Field Management Division, FGIS, (202) 382-0228.

Dana Blatt (202) 382-0378

#

SLEEPING SEEDS COULD PROTECT FOOD SUPPLIES

WASHINGTON—U.S. Department of Agriculture Chemist Sharon Sowa wants millions of seeds to take a nap. Her job is to find new ways to preserve seeds—from wheat and other food staples to passion fruit and guayule that's a natural source of rubber.

Once asleep, the seeds can be revived quickly. Just exposing them to air does the trick, Sowa, of USDA's Agricultural Research Service, says.

That means researchers can work on them to develop new plant varieties that could resist costly diseases, withstand crop-withering drought or add vitamins and minerals to diets.

Sowa spelled out her research goal: "to treat seeds someday much like doctors treat their patients in surgery. The same anesthetics such as nitrous oxide that are used to slow human respiration during surgery also slow the life processes inside seeds."

Sowa's first choice to anesthetize was laughing gas, or nitrous oxide. That's never been tried before, she said.

She is encouraged by the nitrous oxide experiments and will be investigating other gases to find ones best suited for preserving seeds at the National Seed Storage Laboratory in Fort Collins, Colo.

“The lab is insurance against seeds becoming extinct and keeps them available to breed agricultural plants for drought tolerance, disease resistance and other traits,” said Sowa.

On tests of snap beans, she said, air that’s 80 percent nitrous oxide was blown over the seeds. That slowed cell respiration in the beans by 35 percent, which is enough to anesthetize the seeds. One-half hour later, Sowa revived the seeds from their nap by exposing them to fresh air. All the seeds eventually woke up and germinated normally.

“Nitrous oxide is what we call a permeable molecule—it goes in and out of plant cells very easily, without causing any damage,” she explained. “Exactly how it works to slow respiration in humans and seeds is unknown.”

Sowa is now trying the anesthetic on recalcitrant or hard-to-store seeds from tropical and subtropical plants so they can be kept safely. Usually, most seeds can be stored either in temperature controlled rooms or frozen in liquid nitrogen.

But, tropical seeds are usually large and contain up to 50 percent moisture compared to about 10 percent for most vegetable seeds. “They can’t be dried so their high moisture content results in a short storage life,” she said.

“We also are looking for ways to store citrus and other tree crops,” she said. “Currently, we must keep trees growing in orchards if we want to preserve their unique genetic traits for future breeding experiments.

“If just a few cells or buds from these trees could be anesthetized, then regrown into trees when a tree breeder needed them, we would have a much cheaper and safer way to store them.”

ARS’s National Seed Storage Laboratory maintains 240,000 accessions of plant species in cold storage at Fort Collins. Seeds are sent on request to breeders and scientists in the United States and through the world.

Dennis Senft (415) 559-6068

Issued: Sept. 5, 1989

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AGENCIES TO WORK ON LONG-TERM STRATEGY TO PROTECT SPOTTED OWL

WASHINGTON, Sept. 5—U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Interior officials today announced the establishment of an interagency scientific team to develop a strategy for conservation of the northern spotted owl.

F. Dale Robertson, chief of USDA's Forest Service, Cy Jamison, director of USDI's Bureau of Land Management, and John Turner, director of the USDI's Fish and Wildlife Service, said the team will be comprised of scientists from the three agencies.

The team also will have a group of advisors made up of management biologists, silviculturists, and representatives from state agencies.

The team will be headed by Dr. Jack Ward Thomas, wildlife scientist at the Forest Service's Pacific Northwest Forest and Range Experiment Station.

Robertson, Jamison and Turner said the strategy developed by the team will provide information that will help the three federal agencies meet their responsibilities under the Endangered Species Act, and assist the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management as they proceed with land management activities while ensuring conservation of the owl.

The three officials also said the team would use all available information to develop the strategy, and that a draft strategy is expected within six months.

Jamison, Turner, and Robertson said they look at this effort as the major step in resolving the current controversy over protection of the spotted owl and timber harvesting in the owl's habitat.

Rose Narlock (202) 475-3778

Elizabeth Lipscomb (202) 343-5634

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USDA ANNOUNCES PREVAILING WORLD MARKET RICE PRICES

WASHINGTON, Sept. 5—Under Secretary of Agriculture Richard T. Crowder today announced the prevailing world market prices of milled rice, loan rate basis, as follows:

—long grain whole kernels, 12.46 cents per pound;

- medium grain whole kernels, 11.23 cents per pound;
- short grain whole kernels, 11.11 cents per pound;
- broken kernels, 6.23 cents per pound.

Based upon these prevailing world market prices for milled rice, rough rice world prices are estimated to be:

- long grain, \$7.70 per hundredweight;
- medium grain, \$7.02 per hundredweight;
- short grain, \$6.78 per hundredweight.

The prices announced are effective today at 3 p.m. EDT. The next scheduled price announcement will be made Sept. 12, at 3 p.m. EDT, although prices may be announced sooner if warranted.

Gene Rosera (202) 447-7923

#

PLANT GROWTH PROTEIN HIT HARD BY ULTRAVIOLET RADIATION

WASHINGTON, Sept. 6—Sun rays linked with skin cancer and tanning also wreak havoc with a vital protein in plant growth and production, U.S. Department of Agriculture scientists have found.

The plant protein, called 32kDa or D1 protein, is essential for photosynthesis, the process by which plants turn sunlight into energy. But a type of ultraviolet radiation called UV-B breaks down the protein so rapidly that after only 30 minutes of exposure, half of the protein has degraded, the scientists say.

“The ozone in the stratosphere currently is filtering out UV-B,” said Autar K. Mattoo, research leader for the Plant Molecular Biology Laboratory at USDA’s Agricultural Research Service, Beltsville, Md. However, Mattoo added, the layer of ozone could become depleted.

He said that because the 32kDa protein is at the heart of photosynthesis and is highly degraded in UV-B, “we might see more protein being degraded in the future and an impact on plant efficiency that could eventually affect crop yields.”

As plants are exposed to light and more of the protein is broken down, he said, the plants produce more protein to maintain a balance. “If they didn’t keep up, they couldn’t continue photosynthesis.”

Mattoo said, “One strategy to combat ultraviolet radiation damage is to find how this plant protein behaves in ultraviolet-resistant plants. There

are several such types of plants, including some soybean cultivars. We need to study the traits that cause this resistance and see if we can exploit this knowledge for transferring resistance into other plants.”

In 1988, Mattoo and colleague Marvin Edelman of Israel’s Weizmann Institute of Science tested the effect of 14 different wavelengths of light on the 32kDa protein in duckweed, an aquatic plant. The wavelengths ranged from 280 nanometers to 730 nanometers. A nanometer is one-billionth of a meter. Visible light usually has a wavelength of 450 to 650 nanometers.

The plants were exposed to the different wavelengths for periods ranging from 15 minutes to 48 hours. The scientists then ground up the plants and checked to see how long the 32kDa protein remained to perform its function.

“We found that the protein was degraded at all the wavelengths we tested,” Mattoo said. “But the highest degree of degradation was in the ultraviolet range, at about 300 nanometers.”

A report of their work will appear in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences in early September.

According to Edelman, chlorophyll—the substance that gives plants their green color—might help screen out the harmful effects of UV-B on the plant protein.

“In plants we had grown to have less than 10 percent chlorophyll, we got a 10-fold increase in the degradation of the 32kDa protein in the ultraviolet wavelengths,” he said.

Edelman added that in plants where chlorophyll levels were not altered, degradation of the 32kDa protein in the ultraviolet light was only about three times the rate seen in visible light.

“If we can figure out the steps in degradation of this protein, we might find a way to interfere in this process that wouldn’t be too expensive for the plant,” he said. “It’s a fascinating problem at the cellular and molecular levels, trying to understand this protein.”

Sandy Miller Hays (301) 344-4089

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USDA CONFERENCE TO SEEK IMPROVED RECRUITMENT OF HISPANICS

WASHINGTON, Sept. 7—The U.S. Department of Agriculture will hold a regional Hispanic Employment Conference Sept. 26 and 27 in Chicago, Ill., to improve recruitment of potential employees of Hispanic heritage.

The conference is part of USDA's Hispanic Employment Program. HEP's goal is to increase the percentage of Hispanics in USDA jobs.

"Hispanic U.S. citizens currently are underrepresented in virtually all USDA job categories compared with their numbers in the civilian workforce," said John J. Franke assistant secretary of administration.

The conference is the second of six such events planned for different regions where populations include high per-capita proportions of Hispanics.

Franke said the conference will be attended by USDA officials, representatives of universities and high schools with significant Hispanic enrollment, local Hispanic community officials, and Hispanic advocacy groups.

"This conference has been designed to impact on and have a positive effect on the increased employment of Hispanics," said Naomi Churchill, acting director of USDA's office of advocacy and enterprise. "We will specifically define procedures for contact between USDA and the region's many sources of job candidates of Hispanic descent. Further, we will train USDA HEP managers to utilize these recruitment contacts so we can begin attaining equitable representation of Hispanics on the USDA employment roles."

On Sept. 25, USDA will conduct a career symposium on the campus of the Chicago High School for the Agricultural Sciences to acquaint students with career opportunities in agriculture.

The students will also meet and talk to contemporary Hispanic role models that are successful USDA employees.

USDA national HEP manager Vionette Tidwell said the overall aim of the conference is to establish ongoing contacts between USDA and sources of job applicants, including placement officers at universities and high schools with a high enrollment of minority students.

“This conference will focus regionally on Chicago, New York, and New Jersey, but the procedures we develop there will serve as a model for future conferences,” Tidwell said. “It’s a small beginning, but an important one which shows USDA is dedicated to equal opportunity in its employment program.”

Vie Tidwell (202) 382-1130

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